

Tech Torch

The numbing miles were of little comfort to Bob, as he contemplated the next chapter in his life. The survival training that began as a young boy and honed by the Army ensured he would not starve or be cold. Gas, oil and tires were another matter.

So, Bob plotted a course to the nearest mining claim he still worked, to load up on sellable agate, jaspers, crystals and mineral specimens. The work was hard, but it kept him from dwelling on his collapsing life.

Rock shops were always in need of new material. Bob was able to build up a fair amount of cash in hand. By the time he reached the East coast, his truck was almost empty of rock. Autumn was approaching and Bob had no desire to be living off the land or mining during the winter. The end of his rock shop run left Bob in New Jersey. He applied to several electrical and TV repair shops for an 'inside job'. His prior (technical) training and business experience landed him a nice paying job, with Tech Torch in Carlstadt, NJ.

Once there, Bob began working in their research and development department. They sub-contracted to NASA to develop equipment that could be used on space missions. Tech Torch developed the smallest torch yet made by 1968/69, which weighed 2.5 oz. Bob was also helping to develop a device that could detect seismic activity on the lunar surface, then relay it back to Earth.

The secretary pool at Tech Torch had dozens of batty eyelashes directed in Bob's direction. His second marriage was to his personal secretary; her name long forgotten; who convinced him he needed a woman in his life.

"She lived...she had this kind of (10 acre) farm like deal in Clifton, and it was nothing but a growing field for marijuana. She had 2, (no) 3 grown kids who were all potheads. She ruined them kids. That marriage didn't last hardly at all."

"Cause, you know, (before) a marriage, you're (only) gonna know part of that person. You know the real truth of that person once you say, 'I do.' Then it's a whole new, different category of human being. Then all the skeletons come out!"

Once Bob realized the legal liability his new wife represented, he demanded an annulment, or he would report her to the local sheriff. "Straight Arrow" Bob did end up ratting her out to the local cops.

"Finally, I just had to go tell the (company security), 'Hey, we got a pothead around here.' Cause she was under a high security clearance."

"Didn't even have no sex with her either."

The long arm of the law finally found Bob in New Jersey, and sheriff DeBono had a score to settle.

“Again, I got shanghaied...same man, Sheriff DeBono came after me. (He) handcuffed my hands behind my back and run a chain down from there to my ankles, then up to my neck. I was led like a puppy dog out of my own office. That was the end of my Tech Torch/NASA career.”

“So they hauled me back to Trinidad and there’s my truck sittin in Carlstat, NJ, (with some) rock and no way to get it home.”

“(They took) me back to Trinidad for being a hot check (writer). Forgery and all that stuff, (saying) I had made \$1,800 in bad checks...to Safeway. It wasn’t me, and I could prove it because of the dates, (since) I was working at Tech Torch.”

“They put me in jail after (we) got back to Trinidad. Then my dad and (one of my sons) came down to the jail house to identify me as the one who wrote the bad checks. I just shook my head...what the hell was I gonna say?”

“Judge Maybury wouldn’t even accept the paystub I had from Tech Torch at the time those checks were written. Judge Maybury says I can’t leave Trinidad city limits for 6 months. Fuck... that was all she wrote. No more Tech Torch, no more nothing.”

Yet again Bob was forced to leave a lucrative job and pulled back to Trinidad. Further insult to the injury of losing the big house on Pinon Street, and his downtown businesses after Nellie died.

Frank offered Bob employment to work in sanitation just as he’d done since he was a small boy. Bob refused and went to work for Trinidad Community T.V. He endured his 6 months, growing increasingly furious having to watch his parents and the welfare agency’s influence over his children. Since the Welfare office kept Bob from having contact with his kids, Bob became the bad man in all their eyes. Once Nellie opened that door – Bob had lost his children.

As soon as the law allowed, Bob left Colorado for good. His oldest daughter, Cathy, had turned 18 and she left the welfare system to live with her grandparents. Gertrude was sick with cancer by this time....

(Personal Input)

In doing research to back up some of Bob's recollections, I came across a New York Times article from Nov 1970, titled, "Former Head of Jersey Police Is Indicted on Wiretap Charges."

In part, "The Bergen County Prosecutor's office today announced the indictment of former State Police Superintendent Dominick R. Capello and two others on wiretap charges."

The charges named two members of Mr. Capello's detective agency for conspiracy to wiretap, soliciting someone to conduct wiretaps and possession of wiretap equipment: all illegal under a state wiretap law.

"The third man indicted was Edward Andriola, president of the Tech Torch Company of Carlstadt. He was charged with conspiracy and soliciting someone to conduct wiretaps."

"The indictments allege Mr. Capello was hired by Mr. Andriola to put a wiretap in a phone at his plant, because he suspected someone was leaking company secrets."

Bob was working for Tech Torch at this time. While I doubt Bob had anything to do with the wiretapping... I wondered if his 'ratting out' his brief pothead wife, prompted Tech Torch's president to do what he did. Hard to second guess events, but this was just too close to ignore.

(End Input)